Canada

CANADIAN COAST GUARD SHIP WOLFE

Aboard the Canadian Coast Guard aids tender, WOLFE, a crew of 43 patrols British Columbia waters to maintain and monitor a variety of navigational aids.

The CCGS WOLFE is well-equipped to accomplish the tasks she must perform. The WOLFE's engines produce 4000 horsepower giving the 2171 ton vessel a maximum speed of 13 knots. Built in 1959 by Canadian Vickers of Montreal, she is 77 meters long, 14.7 meters wide and draws five meters. In 1974, the WOLFE was fitted with an ice breaking bow, had her hull strengthened and an additional 9.1 meters was added to her foredeck. The extended foredeck enables the WOLFE to conduct operations with large helicopters such as the Canadian Coast Guard S61N SIKORSKY from a very spacious cargo deck area.

The WOLFE can lift 20 tons with her derrick and can easily service the six ton buoys used to mark the Coast Guard's vessel traffic services deep sea vessel routes and separation schemes in the straits of Juan de Fuca and Georgia and the approaches to the Port of Prince Rupert.

In a typical operation, a buoy is pulled out of the water and set on deck. The crew then examines the moorings and water washes the buoy with a high pressure hose to remove barnacles, sand and seaweed. The servicing completed, a buoy is replaced in the charted location.

Large navigational buoys are refurbished on an annual basis. The annual servicing, including repainting and changing of batteries, is carried out on the deck of the vessel while at sea. Once every four or five years when a major servicing is needed, the buoys are hoisted onto the deck and transported to the Coast Guard District Base in either Prince Rupert or Victoria. Thereafter, the buoys are sand blasted to white metal and repainted with several coats of paint with the top coat conforming to the colour requiremens of the Canadian Buoyage System.

In addition to servicing buoys, the WOLFE, along with other Canadian Coast Guard aids tenders the CAMSELL and the SIR JAMES DOUGLAS maintain shore aids such as beacons and fog signals and supply 43 manned lighthouses throughout the coastal region with fuel, construction materials and groceries. The three Canadian Coast Guard vessels are often used as secondary search and rescue resources.

A patrol on the WOLFE may take her on a return trip from her assigned base in Prince Rupert to the Canadian Coast Guard Base in Victoria. With a cruising range of 9,600 kilometers and an ample cargo hold, the WOLFE can carry out extensive missions and may be at sea for up to a month at a time. Once she is docked, a shore crew checks the ship from stem to stern performing routine maintenance work which may be necessary while a crew change is taking place.

CCG Western Region

Aids to Navigation

NAME	TYPE	BASE
CAMSELL	icebreaker/ aids tender	Victoria
WOLFE	icebreaker/ aids tender	Prince Rupert
SIR JAMES DOUGLAS	icebreaker/ aids tender	Victoria
MISKANAW	aids tender	Fort McMurray
DUMIT II	aids tender	Hay River
TEMBAH	aids tender	Hay River
ECKALOO	aids tender	Hay River
NAHIDIK	aids tender	Hay River
SIKORSKY HELICOPTER(1)	aids servicing/ supply unit	Prince Rupert
HELICOPTER(5)	aids servicing	Victoria

Initially the WOLFE was assigned to ice breaking duties on the lower St. Lawrence River. She was subsequently re-assigned to the Canadian Coast Guard Base in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island where she tended navigational aids and performed ice breaking duties in the Northumberland Straits. After a fire gutted her engine rooms in 1981, the WOLFE was refitted at a cost of $3.5 million.

In 1982, Canadian Coast Guard aids to navigation vessels the ALEXANDER MACKENZIE and the WOLFE switched coasts. The WOLFE was reassigned to the west coast to enable the Coast Guard to carry out an increased aids to navigation program brought about by the expansion of the Port of Prince Rupert. With the CAMSELL in the western Arctic for five months every summer and fall, large navigational buoys could not be serviced by either the ALEXANDER MACKENZIE or the SIR JAMES DOUGLAS because of their limited lifting capacity.

With her steam Skinner Unaflow engines, the WOLFE is unique in her role as a member of the Canadian Coast Guard fleet. She is the last steam driven Coast Guard vessel on the west coast and is one of four steam powered ships presently operating in Pacific waters.

Since her arrival on the west coast, the CCGS WOLFE has become a welcome and integral part of the Canadian Coast Guard aids to navigation operations, helping to improve safety at sea for ships, and seamen and protecting the environment.

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